



State of Wisconsin
Lieutenant Governor

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Scott McCallum
Lieutenant Governor

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SUBJECT: Feds and state sign agreement allowing select businesses to experiment with environmental regulatory innovations

MADISON, Wis. – The way is clear for up to 10 Wisconsin businesses to experiment with new approaches for protecting the environment thanks to an agreement between state and federal government officials signed today at the State Capitol.

The agreement establishes the approach government agencies will use to allow select Wisconsin businesses to experiment with regulatory innovations that remove administrative burdens while offering better environmental performance.

Signing the agreement were Lieutenant Governor Scott McCallum, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary George E. Meyer and David A. Ullrich, acting regional administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5.

The agreement signals the federal government's willingness to enable states and businesses to pursue environmental excellence while fulfilling their responsibilities to the public. It covers Wisconsin's Environmental Cooperation Program, which was authorized in the state's 1997-99 biennial budget. The program enables WDNR to establish facility-specific, five-year environmental agreements with up to 10 companies covered by environmental permits and licenses.

"This agreement encourages superior environmental performance," said Meyer. "Wisconsin businesses that sign up to participate in the program must still fulfill their basic environmental requirements, but regulatory guidance and rules will be flexible to encourage pollution prevention."

The WDNR-EPA agreement also protects environmental standards, gets rid of unnecessary paperwork, and allows for new opportunities to protect the environment in ways the

existing regulatory system does not allow. “I believe Wisconsin companies want to protect the environment, but in ways that make sense for our state, said McCallum.

The agreement is the first in the nation under a 1998 regulatory innovation agreement between U.S. EPA and an influential policy group of state environmental agency directors known as the Environmental Council of States (ECOS). Meyer is an ECOS member.

The memorandum of agreement between WDNR and EPA clarifies for businesses and the public the roles, responsibilities and time frames for actions the two agencies will take to handle cooperative agreement applications submitted by Wisconsin businesses.

State-company agreements would be legally-binding and could allow WDNR to waive or modify permit procedures, for example, in exchange for a company establishing an environmental management system to address conventional pollution subject to environmental restrictions. State-company agreements could also call for companies to seek environmental improvements not subject to current regulatory mandates, such as energy and water savings.

WDNR and EPA would retain their enforcement authority over companies experimenting with environmental regulatory innovations.

Note: Photos of the signing ceremony, copies of the memorandum of agreement and information on Wisconsin’s Cooperative Environmental Agreement Program are available on WDNR’s World Wide Web site at <www.dnr.state.wi.us>; look for the scroll-down menu near the bottom of the home page, click on the Bureau of Cooperative Environmental Assistance, then on “News and Events.”